The Haunting of the Spanish Empire. (Proto-)Gothic Elements in Cabeza de Vaca's Naufragios and Garcilaso de la Vega's La Florida del Inca

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Abstract:	This is the story of a double haunting. On one hand, Spanish explorers and conquerors (Conquistadores) were immersed into a totally new and unknown territory when they achieved the task of going further north of Mexico and, sometimes, what they found was terrifying; on the other hand, their own actions contributed to the creation of an appreciation of Europeans as quasi-demons. The two selected texts are good accounts of this double haunting. Both beginning in the Florida Peninsula and going deeper into the country, Cabeza de Vaca's Naufragios [Shipwrecks] and Garcilaso's La Florida del Inca, deal with supernatural events, magical practices, kidnapping and torture and, specially, the astonishment of the Spaniards when they had to confront and were haunted by the uncanny.

Title: The Haunting of the Spanish Empire. (Proto-)Gothic Elements in Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios* and Garcilaso de la Vega's *La Florida del Inca*[1]

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Introduction

This is the story of a double haunting. At the beginning of one of the most epic quests in the history of Humanity, a group of works accomplished the task of narrating and recreating how a new continent was discovered, explored and conquered by men who some decades earlier were fighting for their own land. The major and minor expeditions that crossed the continent since the first decades of the 16th century not only discovered new lands for European eyes, but also set the scene of today's world. Among them, the ones of Pánfilo de Narváez (1478-1528) (expedition between 1528 and 1536) and Hernando de Soto (1500-1542) (expedition from 1539 to 1543) are two of the most famous examples. However, the real records of these expeditions were far from the 'supposed' quest for Paradise. What happened far beyond the borders of the known world has conditioned the history of the Western Hemisphere ever since. On one hand, Spanish explorers and conquerors (Conquistadores) were immersed in a totally new, unknown territory when they eventually reached lands further north of Mexico; what they found –in many instances– was terrifying. On the other hand, their own actions contributed to an appreciation of Europeans as quasi-demons. Literary critics and historians have dealt widely with the terrible actions performed by Spaniards (and other Europeans) in the new continent:[2] Atlantic slave tradetraffic, destruction of native cultures and the imposition of Catholicism have been remarked as some of the most disturbing facts that were developed during and after these years. Nevertheless, the terribleness of the experience itself has been much less explored, even if we have first- and second-hand remarkable testimonies that provide a lot of historical information, and with many details that fall within the field of Gothic or proto-Gothic literature.[3]

[2] For more information on this topic, see, for instance: Griffin: 2002; Kamen: 2003; or, Maura: 2006.

[3] However, Gothic is not the only academic approach to these works, since they can also be interpreted in the context of (proto-)postcolonial literature. For example, Henry Schwarz (2000), when attempting to offer a definition and enlarge the canon of Postcolonial Studies, has already disserted on the implications of the early European colonial expansions (and their texts) in relation to this field of study: 'In a larger historical temporality, postcolonial studies also considers the *longue durée* of European expansion, exploration, and conquest during the so-called Renaissance or Early Modern era of European history. In 1492 Christopher Columbus, sailing west from Spain, mistakenly thought he had landed in China. A scant six years later Vasco da Gama, sailing from Portugal and somewhat better informed, found a reliable sea route east to the south Asian port of Calicut. European naval expansion in both directions saw tremendous increases in commodity circulations and resulted in a boom of seafaring navigational technology. Most striking perhaps, considered on a world scale, were the results of contact: the declination of populations in the Americas and the enforced movement from Africa and Asia of people to the Americas, and from Europe to the settler colonies of the Americas, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and other places. Entire continents were cleared of their inhabitants in order to make space for new European settlers, and paradoxically new groups of people, mainly from Africa and Asia, were shipped to the Americas to serve

Gothic Literature has usually been stated to begin in 1764 with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*, by Horace Walpole (1717-1797). However, Academy has widely disserted on the presence of Gothic elements decades (and even centuries) prior to the second half of the 18th century. One of the most outstanding cases of study has been William Shakespeare (1564-1616) and his tragedies,[4] as Dale Townshend has pointed out:

> Behind Shakespeare's supernatural imagination, then, lies a preoccupation with the superstitions of the English nation, the poet's dramatic utilization of these tropes invariably appropriate to the play's action, and never pushing beyond the limits of plausibility established by the popular traditions themselves. Structurally beyond the pale of neoclassical strictures, and trafficking, even in those plays with foreign settings, in a version of the supernatural that was peculiarly English, Shakespeare was the "Gothic bard" in all formal, historical, national, and supernatural connotations of that word (2015: 41).

Some of the Shakespearean characteristics Townshend highlights, like the utilization of popular traditions and superstitions, will also be common in the texts discussed here, as pointed out below. In consequence, the discussion that is going to be developed below needs to understand within this context. The elements analyzed in the following pages are not exclusive of the Gothic genre, but they have been present in the history of literature since centuries ago. However, once authors like Horace Walpole and his continuators stablished the 'canon' of the Gothic, many of these elements began to be a constituent part of the new genre. Even though the authors presented here (and many

as their slaves. Of course the first people did not entirely disappear, nor were the European reasons given for slaughtering, enslaving, converting, infecting, or neglecting them entirely convincing. Nonetheless, the modern world has been decisively shaped by these events. Many would still argue that the rise of Europe to global dominance from 1500 to 1950, with the holocausts and diasporas thus caused, has been the most significant event structuring world power in the year 2000' (2000: 2).

Alison Rudd (2010) also relates the beginnings of the European colonial expansion and the literatures produced on its regards as the grounds of Postcolonialism and Postcolonial fiction: 'Postcolonial discourse is based on the premise that European colonialism between 1492 and 1945, involving imperial expansion and political gain and the occupation of most of the world, was a process that was, according to Robert Young, both 'specific and problematic [and] extraordinary in its global dimension'. […] Postcolonial writers from a variety of locations utilize a range of narrative strategies in order to express the experience of postcolonial conditions, to articulate the unspeakable history of colonialism and to uncover the obfuscation, silences and omissions inscribed by colonial discourses. The Gothic as a mode of writing can provide one such strategy, furnishing these writers with a means, in narrative and idiom, to expose and subvert past and continuing regimes of power and exploitation, and to reinscribe histories that have been both violent and repressed. In addition, as a mode of criticism, the Gothic provides a framework trough which to critically analyse postcolonial texts' (2010: 1-2).

[4] Even if some of his comedies or historical dramas can also be included within this category of (proto-)gothic.

others) did not create the Gothic novel, at least his works contributed to pave the road for its later development.[5]

~~Many of the elements that were going to be lately used by gothic authors had already been developed by many different literary traditions.~~ Since the Middle Ages,[6] the inclusion of fantastic and magical elements in epics and narratives began to pave the road for the later development of Gothic literature.[7] Focusing on Spanish letters, Xavier Aldana Reyes (2017) has traced back these origins to works such as *Libro de Alexandre* (*c*. 1250), *Calila e Dimna* (1251), *Gran Conquista de ultramar* (*c*. 1291) Gonzalo de Berceo's (1190-1264) *Milagros de Nuestra Señora* (c. 1260), *Libro del caballero Zifar* (*c*. 1300), Don Juan Manuel's (1282-1348) *El conde Lucanor* (*c*. 1330), or Juan Ruiz's (1283-1350) *El libro de buen amor* (1343). During the Baroque (the so-called Golden Age of Spanish letters), there were some figures who deserve to be brought to the debate here. The most important ones were María de Zayas y Sotomayor (1590-1661) and Juan Pérez de Montalbán (1602-1638). Montalbán published in 1624 the collection of short novels *Sucesos y prodigios de amor*, in which many gothic elements are included. Two of these stories stand out of the rest: 'La fuerza del desengaño,' and 'La mayor confusion.' The second of these narrations deals with the motif of incest, usually employed by gothic authors as Horace Walpole and Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818) prove in their works *The Mysterious Mother* (1768) and *The Monk* (1796), respectively; meanwhile, 'La fuerza del desengaño' includes gothic scenarios and characters, such as a specter or Death himself, who appears in a foggy country landscape. In his seminal book *Spanish Gothic. National Identity, Collaboration and Cultural Adaptation*, he asserts that

> Although the Gothic is not dependent, like the fantastic, on supernatural or magical elements, it is not unusual for it to be described as such, especially given that the rise of supernatural fiction coincides with the beginnings of the Gothic as a literary formula […] and that the mode has been distinguished from visceral or explicit horror in its preference for the spectral and the uncanny […] (2017: 6).

[5] In a similar way, something alike will happen when discussing the presence of magic, not only as a folkloric-anthropologic element, but also as a literary resource frequently used in Gothic or supernatural-related works.

[6] However, even if the Middle Ages are going to be used as our starting point, many of these elements have been keystones of literature since the first written records. For instance, it may be remembered the *Epic of Gilgamesh* which, for the first time in written literature, depicts the return of a dead man (Enkidu) to the world of the living.

[7] In these regards, see, for instance, the essays by José Ramón Trujillo (2008) and Ana Mª. Mussons (1993) cited in the Bibliography ~~(1993)~~.

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However, as the discovery for European eyes and conquest of the Americas began, Iberian writers had new resources to illustrate their works with fantastic and out-of-track elements, obtained from the chroniclers who had already taken part in the first expedition. Bearing in mind that chivalric romances were very familiar for these men,[8] it is not strange to discover that fantasy will also work in reverse, populating the first texts produced on regards of the new continent. Not only Cabeza de Vaca and Suárez de Figueroa will fall in this vice, but many chroniclers, making American narratives specially relevant for the early development of (proto-)Gothic in Spain.

The exploration of Florida began in 1513 with the expedition led by Juan Ponce de León (1460-1521). During this trip, the peninsula was first discovered (on March 27th, Easter Sunday, 'Pascua Florida' in Spanish) and its coasts ~~got~~ circumnavigated; in consequence, the initial thought of it being an island was rejected. After this expedition, many others came all along the century, until Pedro Menéndez de Avilés (1519-1574) founded Saint Augustine in 1565 (forty years before the British were definitively stablished in Jamestown). The foundation of this town and fortress, besides marking the beginning of the actual Spanish control over Florida, stopped the French pretensions on the same territory, where some Huguenots (led by René de Laudonnière –1529-1574–) had begun to land in the previous years.[9]

Among the mentioned major later expeditions to Florida, Pánfilo de Narváez's and Hernando de Soto's were two of the most productive. This profit cannot be calculated in terms of conquest or foundations, because there were none of these aspects; however, these voyages were used as sources for many later narratives, written by both survivors and by chroniclers who had met some of these survivors. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (1490-1559) and Gómez Suárez de Figueroa (1539-1616) are good examples of these two categories.

[8] Only to cite a case, remember *Las sergas de Esplandián* (1510), by Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo, that was used to 'baptize' California after the mythical kingdom ruled by Amazons which appears in that novel.

[9] Bev Hogue (2016) has discussed about this particular event, linking it to the Gothic tradition, too: 'Lured by legends of gold and the Fountain of Youth, early Spanish explorers found terrain so impenetrable and unfamiliar that they kept moving on, hoping for better conditions or treasure ahead. However, they eventually adapted to the sub-tropical environment and established a colony at St. Augustine in 1565. Just a year earlier, however, French Huguenots had set up a colony at Fort Caroline, in present-day Jacksonville, but the Spanish saw this as a threat and sacked the fledgling colony. Francis Parkman's *Pioneers of France in the New World* (1865) casts this frontier massacre as a mythic conflict between forces of darkness and light' (2016: 150).

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The first narrative included in this study is *Naufragios*, written by Cabeza de Vaca, and published in Zamora (Spain) in 1542. It relates the expedition led by Pánfilo de Narváez, its failure after a shipwreck near Tampa Bay, and the (mis)-adventures of the survivors for the next eight years. During this time, these men, under the new leadership of Cabeza de Vaca, crossed the continent until they, eventually, found a Spanish expedition searching for native slaves in what today is the border of Arizona with Sonora (Mexico), and until they could return to Mexico City. The value of this report lies in the fact that it was written by a person who actually witnessed those moments, who suffered the hardships he accounts and who saw what he describes. This supposed reliability could be questioned by the inclusion of many magical or supernatural elements, though. Another value of *Naufragios* is its quasi-novelistic tone, turning true Benjamin Allen's statement: 'There is some indication that captivity narratives like that of Cabeza de Vaca may have led to Cervantes' invention of the modern novel' (2008: 193). R. T. C. Goodwin, who has also studied the text, remarks:

> Six markedly novelistic episodes in the *Naufragios* describe miraculous and supernatural events: soon after the four were permanently reunited and on the move, Cabeza de Vaca again became isolated from his companions and was saved from the cold night by a spontaneously combusting bush; reunited with the others, he then resuscitated an Indian who was dead or nearly dead; an Indian tribe told the four about a mysteriously malignant demon-surgeon called Mala Cosa; Cabeza de Vaca then surgically removed an arrowhead buried deep in an Indian's back, near the heart; the passage cited above in which Spanish anger led to an epidemic; and the Mora de Hornachos (166).

For its part, the second selected work is *La Florida del Inca*, written by Gómez Suárez de Figueroa (who always used the pen-name Inca Garcilaso de la Vega) and published in Lisbon (then under Spanish rule) in 1605. This writer and historian is also famous for being the first mestizo (son of a Spanish conqueror and a Peruvian princess) who acquired intellectual relevance. He lived in Córdoba (Spain) during the Golden Age, and had relation with such important figures as Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), Luis de Góngora (1561-1627), or Pablo de Céspedes (1538-1608). Unlike Cabeza de Vaca's text, Figueroa's lacks that sense of adventure that impregnated the previous one. Acting more like a chronicler, the mestizo author tried to compose a historical work (based on the testimony of Gonzalo Silvestre –unknown-1592–, survivor of de Soto's expedition) with the main purpose of justifying the Spanish conquest and colonization of Florida, after the aforementioned French attempts of stablishing a colony there too.

As mentioned above, the double haunting of the title makes reference to the actions performed by the Europeans (Spanish in this case) when they arrived in the new continent; it also makes reference to certain traditions, places, or scenes they found as they advanced inland. Before analyzing these categories of haunting agents, it is necessary, at least, to mention a characteristic shared both by *Naufragios* and *La Florida del Inca*. It is also shared by, presumably, almost all the texts about the Spanish conquest: distance. Even if this element ~~could~~ might seem not to belong to the category of 'haunting,' when it is as deep and definitive as it appears in these texts, distance becomes a really disturbing factor, which also contributes to haunt the bodies and souls of the conquerors. As Peggy Samuels points out:

> If there was one thing that most sharply brought to consciousness a Spaniard's sense of his distance from home, it was the thought of death. Hythloday may have considered that "one can get to heaven equally well from any place on earth," but the Spaniards who explored the Americas felt differently. Cabeza de Vaca reports that "we regarded it as certain that we should all become [sick], and could pass out of it only through death, which from its coming in such a place was to us all the more terrible" (34). And Cortez, in his dispatch to Charles, confesses his fear of Montezuma because "he could do us such injury with his great power, that there would remain no recollection of us" (45). The Gentleman of Elvas, recording the De Soto expedition, writes: "[De Soto] died in a land, and at a time, that could afford him little comfort in his illness, when the danger of being no more heard from stared his companions in the face, each one himself having need of sympathy, which was the cause why they neither gave him their companionship not visited him, as otherwise they would have done" (233). In each case the author attributes this fear to an entire company, not simply to himself. Each one seems to have felt an uncanny excess of fear augmenting that which should be incapable of augmentation: the fear of death. These descriptions hint that it was the loss of an audience, a Christian Spanish audience, that mattered. Fellow soldiers were not enough; the audience had to be a larger portion of Spain, or perhaps someone located *in* Spain, in order to count (1990: 235-236).

Another general 'haunting' characteristic of the Spanish conquest of the Americas was the establishment of certain institutions that already existed in Europe and which contributed to spreading the Black Legend. These institutions were led, as it could not be otherwise, by the Spanish Inquisition (1478-1834), which was inaugurated in Mexico soon in 1571. As known, Inquisition-related events were one of the main topics of Gothic literature, being present in works as Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* or Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), amongst others. Goodwin also dedicates some lines to this new general characteristic:

> The most obvious explanation for the survivors' change in their story is the appointment of Fray Juan de Zumárraga, first bishop and archbishop of Mexico (1528–1548), as Apostolic Inquisitor in 1536. Zumárraga established an Inquisition that viewed admixtures of Christian and pagan ritual as especially disturbing: the records of trials demonstrate that such 'religious syncretism was the primary concern of the Mexican church'. Thus, when a midwife called Isabel Morales 'La Morilla' was 'convicted of performing illegal surgeries on her patients and

> eliciting the aid of the devil with her¡ incantations', the Inquisitors also recorded her supplications to God and the Madonna. It was all very well to die like an early Christian martyr, but secular conquistadors were not encouraged to channel God's grace themselves, especially not as part of native healing practices (171).

Violence

The two mentioned categories (Europeans' Actions and 'What They Found') will now be analyzed. For everyone acquainted with the history of the American conquest, one of the first facts to bear in mind would be violence. Indeed, Europeans' actions in the new continent were usually led by a wave of violence which contributed to the annihilation of many indigenous peoples. Both Cabeza de Vaca and Suárez de Figueroa's texts deal with this problem, showing the violent actions displayed by the conquerors. Ramon Sanchez states:

> […] because those armed Spaniards are terrorizing the indigenous communities (atemorizados), Cabeza de Vaca fears that the abused indios further along the path will make him and his fellow castaways pay for what those raiding Spaniards have done to the natives (maltratar y hazer que pagássemos lo que los christianos contra ellos hazzian) (2012: 86).

Garcilaso also dedicates some fragments of his narration to the violence perpetrated against the natives, always with the justification of a previous offence by these:

> El general Luis de Moscoso y sus capitanes se indignaron tanto de saber la mala intención del curaca y el engaño que el indio les había hecho que ni admitieron sus buenas razones para que le disculparan de su delito ni quisieron concederle sus ruegos para otorgarle la vida, ni aceptar sus promesas para fiarse en ellas; antes, diciendo todos a una "quien tan malo nos ha sido hasta aquí peor nos será de aquí adelante", mandaron soltar los perros, los cuales, con mucha hambre que tenían, en breve espacio lo despedazaron y se lo comieron (2011: 230).[10]

However, violence does not only refer to Europeans' actions, since it is possible to find examples of violence coming from the natives, who usually were unwelcoming. Probably, one of the best examples of this is the 'Narrative of Juan Ortiz,'[11] included in

[10] 'General Luis Moscoso and his captains were so angry when they discovered the intention of the chief and how the Indian had fooled them that they didn't listen neither to his good reasons nor to his demands of savind the life. However, they all said at once: 'who has been so mean to us can only be worse in the future.' Then, the dogs were released and, having starved for so long quickly dismembered and ate him' (my translation).

[11] For further information on the 'Narrative of Juan Ortiz' as a captivity narrative, see Correoso Rodenas, José Manuel, 2017.

Some other examples of captivity narratives produced during the first decades of the Spanish intercourse in the Americas are those of Gerónimo de Aguilar (1489-1531) and Gonzalo Guerrero (1470-1536). The first one became famous for having acted as translator or 'lengua' for Hernán Cortés's (1485-1547) expedition to the Aztec Empire (1519-1521); the second, for having become a Mayan warrior and having refused being rescued by Cortés, staying with the Mays. The history of both men was sung by Gabriel Lobo Lasso de la Vega (1555-1615) in his epic poem *Mexicana* (1588-1594), and recorded by Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1584) in his *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (1632).

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La Florida del Inca and considered one of the first American captivity narratives.[12] Ortiz is told to have been among the natives for eleven years, and of having experienced tortures and imprisonment from his masters: '[…] estuvo el pobre español mucho rato tendido de lado, atado la barbacoa' (2011: 41).[13]

A third type of violence can be found in these texts, that of the Spaniards against their own compatriots. It is not strange that, among a group of soldiers and castaways, ~~and~~ lost in a foreign and unknown country, some controversies and conflicts might have arisen, ~~specially bearing in mind~~ particularly if one considers the strong character of the leader. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca writes the story of Pantoja and Dorantes, and of the problems they had with some fellow members of the expedition:

> Allende de esto, Pantoja, que por teniente había quedado, les hacía mal tratamiento, y no lo pudiendo sufrir Sotomayor, hermano de Vasco de Porcallo, el de la isla de Cuba, que en la armada había venido por maestre de campo, se volvió con él y le dio un palo, de que Pantoja quedó muerto, y así se fueron acabando; y los que morían, los otros los hacían tasajos, y comiendo de él se mantuvo hasta primero de marzo (2013: 141);[14]

and:

> Por no sufrir en esta vida, Andrés Dorantes se huyó y se pasó a los mareames, que eran aquéllos adonde Esquivel había parado, y ellos le contaron cómo habían tenido allí a Esquivel, y cómo estando allí se quiso huir porque una mujer había soñado que le había de matar un hijo, y los indios fueron tras él y lo mataron, y mostraron a Andrés Dorantes su espada y sus cuentas y libro y otras cosas que tenía. Esto hacen éstos por una costumbre que tienen, y es que matan a sus mismo hijos por sueños, y a las hijas en naciendo las dejan comer a perros, y las echan por ahí. La razón por que ellos lo hacen es, según ellos dicen, porque todos los de la tierra son sus enemigos y con ellos tienen continua guerra; y que si acaso casasen sus hijas, multiplicarían tanto sus enemigos, que los sujetarían y tomarían por esclavos; y por esta causa querían más matarlas que no que de ellas mismas naciese quien fuese su enemigo (2013: 143).[15]

One of these incidents, that of Melchior Díaz, made Cabeza de Vaca change his mind about the relation they were having with the natives up to that moment. As their

[12] In this text, some minor captivities are also mentioned, such as those of Grajales and Vintimilla.

[13] '[…] the poor Spaniard was tied to the barbecue for a long time' (my translation).

[14] 'Besides this, Pantoja, who had remained in charge, mistreated them so badly. So, Sotomayor, brother of Vasco de Porcallo, from Cuba, who had come to America with our father, beat him and killed him. With those who died, jerk bites were made, and they lasted until March' (my translation).

[15] 'Not willing to share our fate, Dorantes joined the 'mareames,' the tribe with which Esquivel had had contact. They told him about Esquivel and how he had fled one night because a woman had dreamed about him. That dream showed how he was going to be killed by his own son. Afterwards, the natives followed him and kill him, and they showed Dorantes Esquivel's sword, beads and book. This is a custom of the 'mareames,' to kill their own sons due to dreams and to give their daughters to the dogs, too. The latter action is performed, according to them, because all their neighbors are their enemies with whom they are continually at war. If their enemies marry their daughters, they can soon be outnumbered and enslaved. That is why they preferred to kill them' (my translation).

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resources were decreasing, the Spaniards realized they had to trust their forced hosts if they wanted to survive:

> However, Cabeza de Vaca, in the Melchior Díaz incident, is confronted by the indigenous community discourse that challenges his civilizer utterances by re-defining what are acceptable meanings and limitations for the natives. It is Cabeza de Vaca's use of the gourd (calabaçón) and not the cross (cruz) that induces indigenous leaders to accede to a dialogue between the Spaniards and the natives, for the gourd carries a narrative that he may not clearly comprehend but which he knows must be used to communicate a reciprocal discourse frame that allows a dialogue. He is obligated to work within and with the native community in order to have a language that truly validates authority for the indigenous people. The gourd as a sign expresses the sphere of native political power and structure and its interconnected expectations. His use of it demonstrates that he anticipates the native questions about authority and discourse orientation (Sanchez, 1990: 93).

To this third kind of violence it can be added that practiced by the natives against other natives. Usually, as the Spaniards were advancing in their expeditions, the native peoples that they encountered mentioned other tribes with whom they were confronted.

Magic

Along with violence, magic was also a haunting and uncanny element brought and found by the Spaniards. Even if magical practices were forbidden by the Catholic Church, in the narration of Cabeza de Vaca it is possible to find how, on many occasions, the main character acts as a shaman and a healer; he even asserts he raised a man from the dead:

> A la noche se volvieron a sus casas, y dijeron que aquel que estaba muerto y yo había curado en presencia de ellos, se había levantado bueno y se había paseado, y comido, y hablado con ellos, y que todos cuantos había curado quedaban sanos y muy alegres[2] (2013: 158).[16]

However, the 'magical' intercourse of Cabeza de Vaca is usually masked under a veil of Catholic religiosity, since he and his men always pray to God or the Holy Virgin Mary in order to be able to heal:

> La manera con que nosotros curamos era santiguándonos y soplarlos, y rezar un "Pater Noster" y un "Ave María", y rogar lo mejor que podíamos a Dios nuestro Señor y su misericordia que todos aquéllos por quien suplicamos, luego que los santiguamos decían a los otros que estaban sanos y buenos (2013, 130);[17]
>
> Otro día de mañana vinieron allí muchos indios y traían cinco enfermos que estaban tollidos y muy malos, y venían en busca de Castillo que los curase, y cada uno de los enfermos ofreció su

[16] 'At night, they returned to their houses, saying that the dead one, who I had healed in front of them, was awaken, had walked and eaten, and talked to them, and that everyone I had healed was healthy and joyful' (my translation).

[17] 'The way we had for healing was making the sign of the Cross and blowing. Then, we prayed a 'Pater Noster' and an 'Ave Maria,' and and begged to Our Lord mercy for them. After we had made the sign of the Cross, they all said they felt well again' (my translation).

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> arco y flechas, y él los recibió, y a puesta de Sol los santiguó y encomendó a Dios nuestro Señor, y todos le suplicamos con la mejor manera que podíamos les enviase salud, pues él vía que no había otro remedio para aquella gente nos ayudase y saliésemos de tan miserable vida. Él lo hizo tan misericordiosamente, que venida la mañana, todos amanecieron tan buenos y sanos, y se fueron tan recios como si nunca hubieran tenido mal ninguno (2013: 156).[18]

Notwithstanding, the scenario depicted by the author is that of supernatural interventions in the ritual practices of the conquerors. This supernatural intervention would later be remembered in works such as those of William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870), who describes how some Spanish ruins in the Southeast were supposed to be haunted.[19] However, as it can be easily deduced, Spaniards were not the only ones performing magical practices. Natives are also presented as people with customs understood as related to magic. Within the category of 'What They Found,' the testimonies of Cabeza de Vaca and the Inca Garcilaso show how the Spaniards witnessed some traditions or doings that were associated with magic or dark forces. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, at the beginning of his narration, describes some disturbing native behaviors:

> Allí hallamos muchas cajas de mercaderes de Castilla, y en cada una de ellas estaba un cuerpo de hombre muerto, y los cuerpos cubiertos con unos cueros de venado pintado. Al comisario le pareció que esto era especie de idolatría, y quemó la caja con los cuerpos (2013: 86-87);[20]

or,

> Tiene por costumbre de enterrar los muertos, si no son los que entre ellos son físicos, que éstos quémanlos; y mientras el fuego arde, todos están bailando y haciendo muy gran fiesta, y hacen polvo los huesos. Pasado un año, cuando se hacen sus honras, todos se jasan en ellas y a los parientes dan aquellos polvos a beber, de los huesos en agua (2013: 127).[21]

The first of these quotations can be interpreted as more disturbing than the others, since it depicts the presence of Castilian boxes, indubitably brought by a previous Spanish expedition. This 'perverse' usage of an object, familiar for them, had to cause

[18] 'Another morning, a group of Indians came to us, bringing five sick men who were crippled and ill. The all had come to see Castillo, to get a cure. Each of them offered their own arch and arrows, and Castillo welcomed them. At the sunset, he made the sign of the Cross and we all begged to the Lord to restore their health, for there was no another way of getting out of that situation. Castillo's piety was so great that, the next morning, all the Indians wrere recovered, and they went as if sickness had never afflicted them' (my translation).

[19] A major example of this circumstance was Simms's plantation, destroyed during the Civil War and portrayed as haunted by the author in his poem 'Ay De Mi, Alhama!' (first published –anonymously– in 1867 in the *Charleston Mercury*). In it, a comparison between the ruins of the South and the Islamic ruins in Spain, both haunted by the ~~terribleness~~ terrors and atrocities of the past.

[20] 'There we found several Castilian merchant boxes, containing each of them the body of a dead man. The bodies were covered by some kind of painted leather. Our commissioner thought it was an example of idolatry and burnt the boxes with the bodies' (my translation).

[21] 'It is their custom to bury the deceased, except for those who had been physicians. These are burnt, and great joy is held around the pyre. Then, their bodies are mashed to dust and, after a year, the dust is mixed with water and consumed' (my translation).

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irremediably a great distress among the members of Cabeza de Vaca's expedition, who already had to daily confront the possibility of death. The second fragment can easily be linked to another practice which was supposed to exist among the Natives: cannibalism. Since Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) first arrived in the Americas, cannibalism was included in the chronicles and relations, as Benjamin Allen, and R. T. C. Goodwin, among others, state:

> By contrast, different concerns in the Old World and the geographical and psychological distance would have made them appear less heretical in Spain, where they would have fitted the pattern of bizarre and miraculous accounts of the Indies that Columbus initiated with his reports of Amazons, Anthropophagai and Cynocephali (Goodwin: 172).

Both the use of these boxes and the ritual cannibalism (because it appears related to some rituals) described by Cabeza de Vaca contribute to the creation of that magical atmosphere described above. Last, but not least, the importance of magic in Cabeza de Vaca's narration can be identified as the triggering element which started the engine of the action. Near the end of *Naufragios*, the narrator accounts an incident which took place before the expedition departed from Spain. As seen in Goodwin's previous quotation, this is the passage of the Mora de Hornachos:

> El gobernador entonces le respondió que él y todos los que con él entraban iban a pelear y conquistar muchas y muy extrañas gentes y tierras, y que tenía por muy cierto que conquistándolas habían de morir muchos; pero aquéllos que quedasen serían de buena ventura y quedarían muy ricos, por la noticia que él tenía de riqueza que en aquélla había. Díjole más, que le rogaba que ella le dijese las cosas que había dicho pasadas y presentes, ¿quién se las había dicho? Ella respondió, y dijo que en Castilla una mora de Hornachos se lo había dicho, lo cual antes que partiésemos de Castilla nos lo había a nosotros dicho, y nos había sucedido todo el viaje de la misma manera que ella nos había dicho (2013: 220).[22]

Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, even with much less intensity, also introduced some scenes with (or about) magic in his *Florida del Inca*. The main difference with the previous work can be found in the fact that, while Cabeza de Vaca deals with both Spanish and native magic, Figueroa only deals with the second type:

> "Hurri Harri, Hurri, Higa, burra coja, Hurri Harri. Doy al diablo la tierra donde los primeros y los más continuos nombres que en ella he oído son tan viles e infames. Voto a tal, que de tales principios no se pueden esperar buenos medios ni fines; ni de tales agüeros, buenos sucesos.

[22] 'The governor then said that he and all his men were going to fight and to conquer exotic lands and peoples. They believed true that, in the conquest, many of them were going to die, too. However, those who survived would become wealthy and powerful, due to the richness that was to be found in the land. The governor added that she should repeat all the past and future things he had said or was going to say. She answered that the "Mora de Hornachos' had told her in Castille prior to our departure, and that the venture had happened just as she had prophesized' (my translation).

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> Trabaje quien lo ha menester para comer o ser honrado que a mí me sobra hacienda y honra para toda mi vida, y aún para después de ella" (2011: 59).[23]

This chant is included in the relation of a native traditional ceremony de Soto and his men attended. In it, a dark deity is summoned to protect material and physical prosperity of those who were taking part in the sinister ritual.

The Presence of the Supernatural

Narrowly linked to magic, both selected authors deal with the presence of supernatural events or elements in their texts. As it happened in the previous section, the presence of the supernatural can be explored from both points of view of the narrations, since both Spaniards and Natives (and their traditions and doings) 'brought' the supernatural to the shores of America, making Florida the first place where a real religious syncretism was developed. Catholic religiosity impregnates both relations, but it is Cabeza de Vaca's the example in which the presence of the supernatural (understood as deity) is more evident and relevant. As mentioned above, the Jerezano and his men always implored some divine intervention when they were supposed to heal sick or injured Natives. Along with their conquering and 'curing' missions, the Spaniards also took the baton of spreading the Gospel among the American Natives, and of converting as many as they could to the Catholic Church. Even if it is true that the preaching activity of Cabeza de Vaca and his companions was not as extensive as might be expected, as the narration approaches its end, the examples of religious messages increase. This can be interpreted in the sense of the 'universal revelation' of the Christian message,[24] something that would grow stronger as they were approaching Mexico and Nueva Galicia,[25] an area in which Catholicism had already been established. Among the religious messages the Spanish delivered, inevitably they had to talk about the highest supernatural creature, God, and His antagonist, the Devil. However, the fragments in which God is directly mentioned are much ~~lesser~~ fewer and less expressive than those in which the Devil appears. God is usually brought to the text when He is needed to help the Spaniards to heal a Native. On the other hand, the Devil

[23] "'Hurri Harri, Hurri, Higa, burra coja, Hurri Harri. I give to the Devil the land where the first and continuos names I have heard are so terrible and infamous. I swear that not good endings can come from these bases. Work who is in need, for I have enough for this whole life, and even for afterwards'" (my translation).

[24] One of the most recognized examples of these 'universal revelation' texts, besides the *Book of Mormon*, is the *Apocalypse of Chiokoyhikoy*, in which a supposed pre-European revelation of the Christian mysteries was given to the Iroquois People of Canada.

[25] Nueva Galicia makes reference to the current Mexican states of Nayarit, Jalisco, Aguascalientes and Zacatecas.

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and Hell are explicitly depicted to those Natives who refuse to convert to the 'true religion:'

> […] y que los que no le querían creer ni obedecer sus mandamientos los echaba debajo de la tierra en compañía de los demonios y en gran fuego, el cual nunca se había de acabar, sino atormentarlos para siempre (2013: 210).[26]

Naufragios does not offer evidence of how many Natives were converted to Catholicism, but it explains how these arguments, far from persuading the inhabitants of the continent, contributed to present the Spaniards as ~~scaring~~ frightening beings.

Nevertheless, the Spanish were not the only ones whose religion was ruled by gods and demons. As they spread their religious message, the ~~N~~natives also offered them ~~how their~~ the bases of their religiosity ~~was conformed~~. Cabeza de Vaca provides so many details about native religions that his text can be used as a primary source to search what they were like. If the conquerors scared the Natives with their Devil, these also had a weapon to strike back: 'Mala Cosa.'[27] Indeed, this mysterious and hellish creature appears as a destroying entity that only brings destruction and death to humans, and against whom little can be done:

> Estos y los de más atrás nos contaron una cosa muy extraña, y por la cuenta que nos figuraron parecía que hacía quince o diez y seis años que había acontecido, que decían que por aquella tierra anduvo un hombre, que ellos llaman Mala Cosa, y que era pequeño de cuerpo, y que tenía barbas, aunque nunca claramente le pudieron ver el rostro, y que cuando venía a la casa donde estaban se les levantaban los cabellos y temblaban, y luego parecía a la puerta de la casa un tizón ardiendo. Luego, aquel hombre entraba y tomaba al que quería de ellos, y dábales tres cuchilladas grandes por las ijadas con un pedernal muy agudo, tan ancho como una mano y dos palmos en luengo, y metía la mano por aquellas cuchilladas y sacábales las tripas; y que cortaba de una tripa poco más o menos de un palmo, y aquello que cortaba echaba en las brasas. Luego daba tres cuchilladas en un brazo, y la segunda daba por la sangradura y desconcertábaselo, y donde a poco se lo tornaba a concertar y poníales las manos sobre las heridas, y decíannos que luego quedaban sanos, y que muchas veces cuando bailaban aparecía entre ellos, en hábito de mujer unas veces, y otras como hombre. Cuando él quería, tomaba el buhío o casa y subíala en alto, y dende a poco caía con ella y daba muy gran golpe. También nos contaron que muchas veces le dieron de comer y que jamás comió; y que le preguntaban dónde venía y a qué parte tenía su casa, y que les mostró una hendidura de la tierra, y dijo que su casa era allá debajo. De estas cosas que ellos nos decían, nosotros nos reíamos mucho, burlando de ellas. Como ellos vieron que no lo creíamos, trajeron muestra de aquéllos que decían que él había tomado, y vimos las señales de las cuchilladas que él había dado en los lugares en la manera que ellos contaban. Nosotros les dijimos que aquél era un malo, y de la mejor manera que pudimos les dábamos a entender que si ellos creyesen en Dios nuestro Señor, fuesen cristianos como nosotros, no tendrían miedo de aquel, ni él osaría venir a hacerles aquellas cosas. Que tuviesen por cierto que en tanto que nosotros en la tierra

[26] '[…] and those who did neither want to believe in Him nor to obey His Commandments were pushed beneath the ground with the demons and the everlasting fire' (my translation).

[27] This 'Mala Cosa' can also be related to that vengeful Other that Matthew Wynn Sivils identifies both as proper of the Spanish accounts of the Conquest and the Southern Gothic (2016: 85).

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> estuviésemos él no osaría parecer en ella. De esto se holgaron ellos mucho y perdieron mucha parte del temor que tenían (2013: 159-160).[28]

In this fragment it can be seen the aforementioned syncretism. It is also one of the few passages in which God is mentioned explicitly. Through the words of the Spaniards, the Natives learn that, if they adopt their conquerors' supernatural entity as their god and savior, 'Mala Cosa' would have no more power against them. However, Spanish arguments seem not to be very convincing, since not a single Native is said to be converted after Cabeza de Vaca's discourse.

Native 'mythology,' however, was not only conformed by gods and demons. When the Spanish were getting closer to already conquered areas, they also found objects or signs denoting a previous Spanish presence in the area. During one of these moments, Cabeza de Vaca and his men interrogate the Natives about certain objects they wear and which are undoubtedly of Spanish handiwork. The answer given by the Natives illustrates how the Spanish presence was re-conforming their sense of religion:

> En este tiempo, Castillo vio al cuello de un indio una hebillera de talabarte de espada, y en ella cosido un clavo de errar; tomósela y preguntámosle qué cosa era aquélla, y dijéronnos que habían venido del cielo. Preguntámosle más, que quién la había traído de allá, y respondieron que unos hombres que traían barbas como nosotros, que habían venido del cielo y llegado a aquel río, y que traían caballos y lanzas y espadas, y que habían alanceado dos de ellos. Lo más disimuladamente que pudimos les preguntamos qué se había hecho de aquellos hombres, y respondiéronnos que se habían ido a la mar, y que metieron las lanzas por debajo del agua, y que ellos también se habían también metido por debajo, y que después los vieron ir por cima hacia puesta de Sol (2013: 198).[29]

[28] 'For these we knew a very strange circumstance happened some fifteen or sixteen years before. It was that there was a man, whom they called 'Mala Cosa,' very short and bearded, whose face was never totally seen. Every time he entered a house, their hairs grew white, and a burning coal appeared at the front door. Then, 'Mala Cosa' entered the house and took whoever he wanted and stabbed him thrice with a stone knife. Then, he disemboweled his victim and roasted the guts. Then, 'Mala Cosa' also cut his own arm thrice, and with his own blood he cured himself. Sometimes, when he danced, he was dressed like a woman, and sometimes like a man. Any time he wanted, he took a house and elevated it, and then let it fall. We were also told that 'Mala Cosa' never ate and was never offered food. He was also asked where he came from, and where his home was. He pointed at a crevice on the ground and said that his house was down below there. We laughed a lot when we were told all these things. As the natives saw we did not believe them, they showed us some evidences of 'Mala Cosas''s wrongdoings. We told them that 'Mala Cosas' was evil, and that the best way of getting free of it was to turn to Our Lord. If they were Christians just like us, they would not be afraid, and 'Mala Cosa' would have no power over them. They had to know that, as long as we remained with them, they were safe. This provoked great joy among them, and part of their fear was gone' (my translation).

[29] 'A that time, Castillo saw a Spanish buckle hanging off of an Indian's neck. He took it and we all asked what was that, and they told us it had come from Heaven. We enquired more about who had brought it, and they replied that some bearded men like us. They had come from Heaven and reached that river. These men brought horses and spears. They actually speared two natives. We also asked what had happened with those men, and they answered they had returned to the sea, and that the spears were placed beneath the water. Then, they headed towards the Sun' (my translation).

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It can sound like a commonplace, but this fragment explicitly shows that the Natives considered the Spaniards as beings ~~coming from~~ that had descended from Heaven, in direct relation with deity. Especially, the last sentence, in which the Spanish are said they somehow returned to the Sun after having escaped an attack, contributes to the long-time spread idea of Conquistadores as demigods.

Unwelcoming Nature

Finally, the last section of this essay will deal with the nature the Spaniards had to face during their journeys through the continent. The latitudes in which Pánfilo de Narváez's and Hernando de Soto's expeditions took place were close to the Gulf of Mexico and the Southwest. In consequence, the characters of *Naufragios* and *La Florida del Inca* at least skipped the cold weather and the storms later explorers (mainly British and American) had to confront.[30] However, although the weather is never a problem in the selected works, Nature sometimes is. For example, as the Spaniards were going on, and they contacted some Native peoples, they also discovered that the country they were entering was not as prosperous as they firstly thought. Far beyond finding gold and silver as they expected,[31] what they actually found were many devastated areas, with poor soil and destroyed villages. This can be interpreted in two ways: 1) the country was poor and the Natives did not know how to make profit of the resources they had; or, 2) since the Natives had already had previous contacts with Spanish conquerors, they devastated their own land to make it unattractive for the foreigners. Whatever it was, both Cabeza de Vaca and Garcilaso depict a scenario in which it is extremely difficult to find shelter or food, and in which the Spanish peril continuously.

[30] Although the areas explored by Cabeza de Vaca and de Soto were far from the 19th (and even 18th) century frontier, 16th century Spain had already reached what today are the northernmost parts of Mexico, so the land northwards of the US-Mexico border constituted a kind of Spanish frontier in America. This conclusion links, once again, these texts with the field of postcolonial studies, as Susie O'Brien has noted: '[…] not only is the frontier territory staked out by the postnational narrative already well worn by the tracks of other liberationist expeditions, most notably those grouped under the banner of "postcolonial," but these expeditions have a funny of always arriving back at the same place – the mythological landscape of America. Before optimistically setting out on yet another quest to establish yet another western frontier, it seems logical, at this point, to take a more critical look at the area in which all these new "posts" are being planted and to examine the history of earlier claim to the territory' (2000, 66).

[31] William Byrd II (1674-1744) refers to this circumstance in his *History of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina Run in the Year of our Lord 1728* (1728): 'Both the French and the Spaniards had, in the name of their Respective Monarchs, long ago taken Possession of that Part of the Northern Continent that now goes by the Name of Carolina; but finding it Produced neither Gold nor Silver, as they greedily expected, and meeting such returns from the Indians as their own Cruelty and Treachery deserved, they totally abandond it' (1984: 152).

More concretely, there is one passage in which this unwelcoming Nature appears perfectly located and described: the 'Isla del Mal Hado.' When Cabeza de Vaca and his men reach an area that is supposed to be near the Mississippi Delta, they spend a winter ~~in this isle~~ on this island. The name it receives (meaning Isl~~e~~and of ~~Bad~~ Ill Fate) makes it easy to comprehend the kind of territory they had landed on. Hurricanes, wild beasts, floodings, etc., are only a few examples of what is described in the chapters concerning this location. Besides this, the episode of the panther, belonging to the 'Narrative of Juan Ortiz,' with a fiery animal as protagonist, could also be included within this section:

> Sucedió que una noche de las que así velaba se durmió al cuarto del alba sin poder resistir el sueño, porque a esta hora suele mostrar sus mayores fuerzas contra los que velan. A este tiempo acertó a venir un león, y, derribando las compuertas de una de las arcas, sacó un niño que dos días antes habían echado en ella y se lo llevó […]. Juan Ortiz, llamando a Dios y cobrando ánimo, le tiró un dardo (2011, 42).[32]

A Practical Case of Study: Relation of the Texts with American Gothic

All the aforementioned characteristics had a strong influence in the subsequent development of American Gothic Literature. Even if the relation of the discussed texts with later productions is not always clear, indubitably what both Cabeza de Vaca and Gómez Suárez de Figueroa stated in their narrations created a shared atmosphere in which the productions of figures such as Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), Washington Irving (1783-1859) or William Gilmore Simms were embedded. However, it is possible to find actual examples of direct influences. For instance, the translation of *La Florida del Inca* (1833) by Theodore Irving (1809-1880) was used by Gilmore Simms or James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), among others.

Nevertheless, these differences also need to be born in mind, since the contexts of the Spanish 16th century explorations and of the first decades of the United States as an independent country (and that of 18th century Britain, when the genre was born) were not the same. However, both *Naufragios* and *La Florida del Inca*, among other works,[33] would start a tradition that would be present in the American Gothic from its beginnings

[32] 'One night it happened that, while he was guarding the tombs, he fell asleep near the dawn. Then, a fierce lion came and forced the barriers of one of the tombs. After that, it took out the body of a child who had been buried two days before. Juan Ortiz, praying to the Lord, speared it' (my translation).

[33] Such as the aforementioned *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, or Bartolomé de las Casas's (1484-1566) *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552) and *Historia de las Indias* (fist published in 1875). The first of de las Casas's texts is especially relevant when dealing with this issue, since it depicts an image of the Spanish Conquistadores which shared some characteristics with the protagonists of the discussed *oeuvres*, like their conception as quasi-demons.

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to the present day: regionalism. First focused on New England, later on the South, and then on the Midwest, the genre has explored the whole of the American spectrum of society, ancestry, economy, etc., gathering the realities of being both a regional and a national production, as Teresa Goddu claims:

> Even when authors such as Edgar Allan Poe or periods such as the twentieth-century Southern Renaissance are associated with the gothic, they reveal the difficulty of defining the genre in national terms: the American gothic is most recognizable as a regional form (1997: 3).

Focusing on the discussed elements, probably one of the most influential episodes was the 'Narrative of Juan Ortiz,' which has been pointed as one of the first captivity narratives that took place in North America.[34] In this episode, as seen above, Juan Ortiz has to face the attack of a panther when he is indebted to the surveillance of the burial place of the village in which he is a prisoner.[35] During this attack, he fortunately kills the animal with an arrow or a spear. In two works by Fenimore Cooper and Gilmore Simms this episode is retold.[36] Both in *The Pioneers* (1823) and *The Cub of the Panther* (1869) a panther appears, and in both of them it is killed by the main characters. A possible source for this influence is the aforementioned translation made by Theodore Irving. Prior to that, Charles Brockden Brown had also retold the episode of the panther in his classic novel *Edgar Huntly*, when the protagonist gets blocked in a cave with the animal and has to kill it and eat its raw flesh in order to survive:

[34] See, for instance, Matthew Wynn Sivils's 'Indian Captivity Narratives and the Origins of American Frontier Gothic,' where he affirms: 'The story of Ortiz's capture in what is now Tampa Bay, Florida, by what were perhaps members of the Uzachile (Yustaga) Timucua tribe, reads very much like a Gothic tale, ripe with grotesque imagery, narrative suspense, and wilderness themes that would come to define the frontier strain of American Gothic fiction' (2014: 86).

[35] In regards of the inclusion of the cemetery, Sivils argues that: 'The Spaniard's ordeal at the burial ground is imbued with a morbid atmosphere similar to that found in later Gothic novels of the frontier' (2014: 86).

[36] Following, once again, Sivils's essay, he states: 'Thus Garcilaso pens what is probably the first in a series of American Gothic panther-killing scenes that would echo down through Brown, Fenimore Cooper, William Gilmore Simms, Harriet Prescott Spofford, and Ambrose Bierce' (2014: 87).
More recently (2016), Sivils has also disserted linking *La Florida del Inca* with the origins of Southern Gothic: 'These origins can be traced to the various tragic narratives that emerged from the Spanish conquest of the Southeastern portion of the North American continent. Accounts from New Spain far predate the conventionally agreed origin of the Gothic in Horace Walpole's 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*, but these ostensibly true stories convey elements that we now accept as firmly Southern Gothic. Racial violence, grotesque tortures and a pervasive fear of a vengeful Other are the hallmarks of these texts, which become even more recognizably gothic when we remember that they relate horrors that emerge from a dark mixture of religious dogma and greed. For example, Garcilaso de la Vega's 1605 *The Florida of the Inca* relates the testimony of three survivors of Hernando de Soto's failed expedition, and this history also includes a harrowing account of the trials of the conquistador Juan Ortiz, whom de Soto's men found living in a Timacua Indian village in what is now present day Florida. Ortiz had been captured by an specially crue Cacique and made to endure a number of torments. One of the most significant of these occurs when the Cacique orders Ortiz to guard the tribe's burial ground from desecration by animals' (2016: 85).

> The beast that was now before me, when stimulated by hunger, was accustomed to assail whatever could provide him with a banquet of blood. He would set upon the man and the deer with equal and irresistible ferocity. His sagacity was equal to his strength, and he seemed able to discover when his antagonist was armed and prepared for defence (1988: 119).[37]

Obviously, Brockden Brown could not use Irving's translation, so his possible source was a previous translation included in Samuel Purchas's *Pilgrimage* (1614).[38]

As the expeditions led by Hernando de Soto and Pánfilo de Narváez/Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca went through the continent, they reached areas never seen by European eyes before in what today is the South of the United States and certain areas of the Southwest, such as Texas, New Mexico or Arizona. A century later this texts were conceived, a new subgenre began to be developed during the first years of the new republic: the so-called frontier gothic. As the settlers were occupying new territories in the unknown backwood areas, new terrors had to be confronted. Along with the perils of Nature, hostile Natives and frightening legends also contributed to the creation of this new literary trend, which would last until the conquest of the continent was completed at the end of the nineteenth century. What the British and (later) American colonist found and had to overcome was first seen and feared by the men included in *Naufragios* and *La Florida del Inca*.

The last characteristic of this relation between the selected texts and American Gothic literature can be stated in terms of the perverse influence of religion. From the early Puritanism to the Southern Renaissance of the fifties and sixties, religion has had a strong presence in American literature, being often used as a source of fear and oppression for the characters. The personages that appear in the works of Cabeza de Vaca and the Inca Garcilaso always have God and the Catholic religion in mind, transferring some of its beliefs to the Natives, as partly explained in the previous

[37] The eating of raw flesh has traditionally been associated with barbarity, especially in American literature (or literature concerning the North-American continent). Some of the most outstanding examples could be Mary Rowlandson's (c. 1637-1711) *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), Sir John Franklin's (1786-1847) diary or, more recently, Chris Dingess and Matthew Roberts's graphic novels *Manifest Destiny* (2014-). In the first example, the captive Mrs. Rowlandson is forced to share her captor's dietary customs, and these often include the ingestion of the raw flesh of animals, especially when in an incursion; the second example includes many passages of Arctic distress, in which the Sir John Franklin's crew was forced to adopt some Inuit customs in order to survive, eating the raw flesh of seals, foxes, and bears, among them; finally, Dingess and Roberts's graphic novels depict the terrors Lewis, Clark, their companions had to faced when they crossed the Missouri. However, Vol. 4 is more like an inserted narrative in which the story of a previous explorer is presented. Among the distresses this soldier had to go through was the eating of raw flesh of bisons and birds to make his way alive to Washington, D.C.

[38] This could also be the source Captain John Smith (1581-1631) used to write his work *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles* (1624), in which the story of Pocahontas is very similar to that of Hirrihigua's wife and daughters.

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paragraphs. This was especially relevant in the areas of the Southwest, where the Natives would later accomplish the presence of Catholicism among them, and the syncretism of it with their own traditions and creeds. As mentioned above, some of the Spanish narrations about religion that the Natives heard included demons, which they later incorporated to their own legends.

Conclusion

As seen in the previous pages, both *Naufragios* and *La Florida del Inca* incorporated many ~~Gothic~~ elements that would later be part of the Gothic tradition, opening the door to consider them as 'proto-Gothic.' However, it cannot be stated that the authors were looking for the same effect as Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), Matthew Gregory Lewis, or Charles Brockden Brown would look for in the next centuries. The inclusion of these elements is the result of a dual circumstance. On one hand, many of these elements (i.e. violence) had already been widely used by writers for centuries, since they are inherent to human nature. Gothic authors would revisit and transform them to provoke the effects of terror and horror Mrs. Radcliffe described. On the other hand, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Gómez Suárez de Figueroa were familiar with different traditions which had already employed some of the fantastic elements they used again in these texts.

The creation of these (and many other) chronicles on the records of the conquest of the Americas contributed to create a mythology that both attracted and repelled new explorers to achieve the enterprise of sailing to the new continent; however this sense can also be interpreted in terms of self-reflection of the fears a nation had towards the unknown. After centuries of struggles in Spain, Conquistadores were, for the first time, in front of an enemy (as they understood America and its inhabitants) of who they had no information. For the first time, they were prone to fight a war against the mysterious, and their minds would play a dangerous role in this battle.

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